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3 March 1959

MEMORANDUM FOR: SA/DDI

FROM: J. C. Graham

SUBJECT: Comment on (State) Memo for NSC Planning Board, "Ten Principal Conclusions and Lessons Deriving from the Taiwan Crises [sic]," of 2 March 1959

1. I believe that Ford's objections (see attached comments) to para. 1 are somewhat overdrawn. Our NIE's do say that the Chicoms have the capability of capturing the offshore islands in the absence of US intervention; the NIE's certainly support the proposition that, in the absence of US support, the garrisons would be lost and they do constitute about one-third of the GRC's effective troops; failure of the US to assist the garrisons, followed by their loss to the Chicoms would have a most serious effect on morale on Taiwan. Whether a communist take-over on Taiwan would actually follow in such circumstances would depend in part, at least, on other actions the US took to offset the impact of the loss of the islands and their garrison. The chicoms certainly had these considerations in mind and I believe that the SNIE's which Hal cites covers these points.

2. By and large this is one of the more objective papers out of State on the Taiwan situation. Para. 6 is especially noteworthy if it says what I think it does. However, it still appears that State is trying to translate the virtues of standing firm against the chicoms last fall into the general proposition that the US must stand firm in the off-shore forever - or until the chicoms renounce all intentions to gain Taiwan. Most of the Asian and world opinion which was sympathetic to our conduct of the crises last fall, would also be sympathetic and relieved if we would withdraw the GRC forces during a period of relative calm. If we do not, we will find many Asians, who supported us last fall, again becoming critical of our "foolhardiness" in remaining committed to these exposed positions.

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